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ALEXANDER HOARDS

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BY

EDWARD T. NEWELL

INTRODUCTION AND
KYPARISSIA HOARD



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INTRODUCTION

No doubt one of the greatest desiderata to students of Greek numismatics is a complete reworking of the entire coinage bearing the types of Alexander the Great, with a view to determining dates, mints, and issues of this extraordinarily large and interesting series of ancient coins. It is evident that the surest basis for such a study will undoubtedly be found in a careful analysis of hoards containing this type of coin. It is the writer's firm conviction that eventually these hoards, when studied as a whole, will be made to do for the Alexander Series what the painstaking study of hoards of Roman coins has accomplished towards the rapidly increasing knowledge of the so-called Roman Consular denarii. This

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| | <p>excuse will serve also for the writer's intention to republish certain hoards which have already been dealt with by previous writers, but which, nevertheless, still possess considerably more information than they have as yet been made to impart.</p> <p>A series of articles, inaugurated by the present one, is intended, therefore, not only as an introduction to the study of Alexandrine coinage, but also to place on record such statistics and notes relating to finds of Alexander coins as the writer has been able to gather from time to time in the course of his studies.</p> <p>In view of the fact that a great deal of our knowledge concerning the coinages of Alexander and his successors will have to rest, in the final analysis, upon the evidences as established by coin hoards, it is peculiarly unfortunate that the latter have so seldom been studied or even recorded with any care. The number of published hoards is indeed small. The majority of such finds, as chance to have contained Alexander coins, have usually been immediately dispersed and so lost</p> |
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beyond the hope of recovery, while dealers have been at pains to rid themselves, as soon as possible, of what to them was almost in the nature of a drug on the market. A notable and honorable exception has been the activity displayed by the Greek Government and, above all, by M. Jean N. Svoronos, director of the Hellenic National Collection, in securing and preserving as intact as possible all hoards unearthed in Greek territory. In this way several important finds have been saved from the general loss. On the whole, though, the greater number of Alexander hoards have been unearthed east of the Ægæan, and the conditions obtaining there have not been favorable to their preservation for scientific purposes. Therefore, every little we may have is of value, and this is the reason for the attention bestowed, in the following articles, on some mutilated record, or on what is now the mere skeleton of a once important find.

AND MONOGRAPHS

THE KYPARISSIA HOARD

THE first hoard which has been chosen for publication and study is a small find of thirty-five coins now preserved in the National Collection in Athens. The distinguished director of that fine collection, M. Jean N. Svoronos, has recently and very kindly given the writer permission to publish this interesting hoard, and the opportunity is here taken of thanking him sincerely for his generosity in thus placing these coins at our disposal. The chief reason for the selection of the Kyparissia Hoard as worthy of heading the list of finds which throw some light on the Alexander question, lies in the fact that it is the oldest in point of burial of all the Alexander hoards known to us. It should therefore definitely fix what were some of the earliest issues of Alexander the Great. It, also, incidentally corroborates the datings previously assigned by the writer to these particular issues.

Only a few of the coins contained in the find have been reproduced, both because

their types are for the most part common, and especially because the coins themselves have suffered considerably from oxidation and so lend themselves but indifferently to reproduction. Those which have been selected were cleaned since their discovery, but it will be seen that, even so, their condition leaves much to be desired. The autonomous issues have not been cleaned and are, therefore, too poor to reproduce. In order that the student may clearly appreciate what particular types of the Greek autonomous coinages were included in the hoard, reference in their description will be made to the plates of M. Babelon's *Traité des Monnaies grecques et romaines*.

In the following detailed description each coin has been given a number for convenience of reference in the discussion. The second number (in parenthesis and following the first) is the serial number given to the coin in the official records of the National Numismatic Museum, Athens. In describing the Philip and Alexander coins reference is made, where possible, to Ludwig Müller's *Numismatique*

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| | <p><i>d'Alexandre le Grand</i> and <i>Numismatique de Philip II</i>, Copenhagen, 1855. The Danish scholar's assignment of these coins to various mints has been completely disregarded, as the greater number of his attributions are worthless, having been based on a theory of mint marks long ago shown to have been erroneous. Instead, attributions to certain mints are made which the writer, because of his long study of this subject, feels are entirely justified. Some of these have already been discussed by him in his previous writings, and in such cases reference to them will be added. In cases where his attributions have not as yet been published, the reader's indulgence is asked until the appearance of a work now in preparation. The scope of the present article is not such as to lend itself to necessary lengthy discussions on various mints and their issues, nor is the material here presented of sufficient quantity to make such discussions either clear or of value.</p> <p>The Kyparissia Hoard contained the following coins :</p> |
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LARISSA IN THESSALY, 400-344 B.C.

1 (1060) DRACHM.

Obv. Head of Nymph facing.

Rev. Horse feeding.

Type of British Museum Cat., *Thessaly*, Pl. vi, No. 1.

LOCRI OPUNTII, 387-338 B.C.

2 (1061) TRIOBOL.

Obv. Head of Persephone to r.

Rev. ΟΠΟΝΤΙΩΝ. Ajax to r.

Type of Babelon, *Traité*, Pl. ccvii, fig. 4.

3 (1062) Similar.

THEBES IN BŒOTIA, 426-395 B.C.

4 (1063) HEMIDRACHM.

Obv. Bœotian shield.

Rev. Kantharos in incuse square.

Type of Babelon, *Traité*, Pl. cc, figs. 23, 24.

SICYON, circa 400-300 B.C.

5 (1064) DRACHM.

Obv. Dove to l. and ΣΙ.

Rev. Dove to l. in wreath. Ε.

Type of Babelon, *Traité*, Pl. ccxxi, fig. 24.

6 (1065) TRIOBOL.

Obv. Chimæra to l. and ΣΙ.

Rev. Dove to l.

Type of Babelon, *Traité*, Pl. ccxxi, fig. 29.

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| | <p>7 (1066) Similar.</p> <p>8 (1067) “</p> <p>9 (1068) “</p> <p>10 (1069) “</p> <p>HISTIÆA IN EUBCEA, 340-338 B.C.</p> <p>11 (1070) TETROBOL. <i>Obv.</i> Head of Nymph to r. <i>Rev.</i> ΙΣΤΙΑΙΕΩΝ. The nymph Histiaea seated to r. on ship's stern. Type of Babelon, <i>Traité</i>, Pl. cxcviii, fig. 28.</p> <p>PHILIP II OF MACEDON, 359-336 B.C.</p> <p>MINT OF AMPHIPOLIS.</p> <p>12 (1039) TETRADRACHM. <i>Obv.</i> Laureate head of Zeus to r. <i>Rev.</i> ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ. The king in kausia and mantle, right hand raised, riding to l. on horseback. Beneath horse, M. Type of Müller, No. 292.</p> <p>13 (1038) TETRADRACHM. <i>Obv.</i> Similar. <i>Rev.</i> ΦΙΛΙΠΠΟΥ. Youthful rider, holding palm branch, to r. on horseback. Beneath horse, an OMPHALOS. Variety not in Müller.</p> |
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14 (1037) TETRADRACHM.

Obv. Similar.*Rev.* Similar. Beneath horse, DOUBLE HEAD and BEE.

Variety not in Müller.

15 (1036) TETRADRACHM.

Obv. Similar.*Rev.* Similar. Beneath horse, DOUBLE HEAD.

Type of Müller, No. 269.

ALEXANDER III OF MACEDON,
336-323 B.C.

MINT OF AMPHIPOLIS.

16 (1051) TETRADRACHM.

Obv. Head of young Heracles.*Rev.* ΑΛΕΞΑΝΔΡΟΥ. Zeus ætophor seated to l. on throne. In front, DOUBLE HEAD.

Type of Müller, style I, No. 853.

17 (1052) Similar.


18 (1053) “

19 (1042) TETRADRACHM.

Obv. Similar.*Rev.* Similar. In front, PROW.

Type of Müller, style I, No. 503.

20 (1043) Similar.

- 21 (1044) Similar.
- 22 (1045) “
- 23 (1049) TETRADRACHM.
Obv. Similar.
Rev. Similar. In front, STERN.
 Type of Müller, style I, No. 758.
- 24 (1050) Similar.
- 25 (1054) TETRADRACHM.
Obv. Similar.
Rev. Similar. In front, RUDDER.
 Variety not in Müller.
- 26 (1046) TETRADRACHM.
Obv. Similar.
Rev. Similar. In front, AMPHORA.
 Type of Müller, style I, No. 527.
- 27 (1041) TETRADRACHM.
Obv. Similar.
Rev. Similar. In front, IVY LEAF.
 Type of Müller, style I, No. 244.
- 28 (1048) TETRADRACHM.
Obv. Similar.
Rev. Similar. In front, QUIVER.
 Type of Müller, style I, No. 591.
- 29 (1040) TETRADRACHM.
Obv. Similar.
Rev. Similar. In front, CLUB and .
 Type of Müller, style I, No. 138.

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30 (1047) TETRADRACHM.

Obv. Similar.

Rev. Similar. In front, DOLPHIN.

Type of Müller, style I, No. 539.

MINT OF TARSUS.

31 (1059) TETRADRACHM.

Obv. Similar, but of "Cilician" fabric.

Rev. Similar, but of "Cilician" fabric.

Without symbol or letter.

Variety not in Müller. Newell, *Tarsos under Alexander*. Am. Jour. Num., Vol. LII, Pl. i, Nos. 16-19.

32 (1055) TETRADRACHM.

Obv. Similar.

Rev. Similar. Beneath throne, A.

Type of Müller, style II, No. 1291. Newell, *loc. cit.*, Pl. ii, Nos. 1-5.

33 (1056) TETRADRACHM.

Obv. Similar.

Rev. Similar. Beneath throne, B.

Type of Müller, style II, No. 1289. Newell, *loc. cit.*, Pl. ii, Nos. 6-15.

34 (1057) TETRADRACHM.

Obv. Similar.

Rev. Similar. Beneath throne, B.

Variety not in Müller. Newell, *loc. cit.*, Pl. iii, Nos. 9-13.

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MINT OF AKE.

35 (1058) TETRADRACHM.

Obv. Similar.

Rev. Similar. Beneath throne M.

Variety not in Müller. Newell, *The Dated Alexander Coinage of Sidon and Ake*, Pl. v, Nos. 12, 13.

This little hoard of fourth-century coins, known in the records of the National Collection at Athens as the "Kyparissia Find," was brought to light some years ago¹ during the construction of a mole or jetty in the harbor of Kyparissia in the western Peloponnesus. When found, a thick coating of brownish-gray oxide covered all the coins. An attempt, not oversuccessful, has since been made to clean a few of the pieces. The original condition of the coins at the time of the burial was apparently very good, but their long interment, aided perhaps by the deleterious action of sea water, has damaged them to a considerable extent.

The approximate date at which our hoard was buried may be determined with

a fair amount of accuracy. Let us first take up the autonomous issues. Of these the Histiaean tetrobol (No. 11) is the only one whose date of issue has as yet been closely determined. Although previous writers have agreed in assigning it to a period after 313-312 B.C., the present writer has recently shown² that this late dating is certainly erroneous with regard to the tetrobols of finest style and their accompanying octobols and obols. This particular group, characterized by its peculiarly fine style, must have been struck immediately after the Athenian liberation of the city from Macedonian supremacy in 340 B.C. The series probably came to an end in 338 B.C., when the battle of Chæronea put a stop, for the time being, to all aspirations for liberty in central Greece. The island of Eubœa almost immediately afterwards came once more under Macedonian domination. It is therefore only the tetrobols of late style and debased weight — far more numerous than the small issue represented by No. 11 — that can be assigned to the period after 312 B.C.

To the other autonomous issues represented in our hoard, somewhat lengthy periods of issue have been assigned. It is significant, however, that, with the possible exception of the Sicyonian drachm (No. 5) and triobols (Nos. 6-10), they all come to an end by 338 B.C. As regards these triobols M. Babelon has assigned to them the wide margin of time extending from 400 to 300 B.C. To the writer, Head's dating, which runs only to 322 B.C., would seem to be the more acceptable, especially as about 330 B.C. — and certainly by 325 B.C. — a large issue of staters and tetradrachms bearing Alexander's types was instituted at Sicyon. This issue may have entirely done away with the striking of autonomous coins here, at least it must have considerably curtailed their output. For us, however, this is somewhat beside the point because the comparatively fine style exhibited by Nos. 5 to 10 show that they must have been struck before the commencement of the last quarter of the fourth century B.C.

The four examples of the tetradrachm

issues of Philip II contained in the Kyparissia Find all belong to the lifetime of that king. None of them belong to the large series of posthumous issues which made their appearance, at first sporadically and in small numbers, later — about 320-318 B.C. — in extraordinarily large quantities. The four specimens are therefore to be dated before 336 B.C.

The presence in the find of tetradrachms of Alexander the Great show, it is needless to say, that our hoard must have been buried after his accession to the Macedonian throne. Furthermore, it is his coins which will have to furnish us with any information as to their date of burial, because none of the autonomous issues — always with the possible exception of the Sicyonian triobols — come down later than 338 B.C. The Alexander tetradrachms, Nos. 16-25, are representatives of the first issue under Alexander at Amphipolis, just as No. 15 is a representative of the last issue under Philip at the same mint. These issues probably covered the years 336 to 334 B.C. The second issue, covering the years 333 and

332 B.C., is represented by Nos. 26 and 27. The third issue, covering the year 331 B.C., is represented by No. 28, while Nos. 29 and 30 represent the fourth issue for the years 330 and 329 B.C. These earlier issues of Amphipolis were somewhat inadequately treated by the present writer in his first monograph on the subject of Alexander's coinages (Reattribution of Certain Tetradrachms of Alexander the Great, *Am. Jour. of Num.*, Vol. XLV, 1911). Since that time a great deal of new material has come to light which will necessitate certain changes being made in some of the details of that article. Nevertheless, the general scheme appears to hold, and, in particular, the earlier issues of the great Macedonian mint seem to have been correctly assembled. Unfortunately, the writer made the mistake of too implicitly following his predecessors in the accepted interpretation of the dates found on the Alexander coins of Ake. This reacted on the dates given to the contemporaneous Macedonian issues, which were thus made to cover too long a period. At that time

also, the writer was uncertain whether these particular Macedonian coins were struck in Pella or Amphipolis, and was rather inclined to decide in favor of the former mint. Since then his continued studies have revealed the fact that the coins represented by Müller's Class I and the writer's types 1-51a in the above-mentioned work, must be assigned to Amphipolis.

The issues of the Cilician mint of Tarsus have been recently worked out in detail by the writer.³ By this we see that the Tarsian specimens, Nos. 31-34 in the Kyparissia Find, all belong to the first issue of the mint in the Cilician metropolis. This issue covered the years 333 to 328 inclusive, and their presence in our hoard corroborates the dates assigned to their companion pieces of Amphipolis.

The remaining Alexander tetradrachm, No. 35, is of the Ake mint. The type was shown by the writer in his "The Dated Alexander Coinage of Sidon and Ake" to have been struck between 332 and 330 B.C.

The presence in the Kyparissia Hoard of

these particular varieties of the Alexander type makes them reciprocally substantiate the dates assigned to them individually. Furthermore, none of these coins fall later, apparently, than 328 B.C. None of the Philip tetradrachms are later than 336 B.C., nor are the autonomous coins — always with the possible exception of the Sicyonian triobols — later than 338 B.C., which fact, in turn, sustains the early dating assigned to the Alexander tetradrachms. With regard to the triobols of Sicyon in the find, we have indicated that there is reason to believe that they too do not conflict with the other indications of an early date for the hoard's burial. Therefore, if we are to allow a little time for the latest of the Alexander pieces to reach the western Peloponnesus, the original owner of this hoard could not possibly have buried it previous to 327 B.C. On the other hand, the coins could not have been buried very much after this date, as is probable from the fact that the immediately succeeding issues of Amphipolis and Tarsus were very large indeed, and so

examples would soon have found their way into the hoarder's savings, as he seems to have drawn so largely on the issues of these two mints. It is also significant that none of the large Alexander issues of Sicyon, which commenced to appear at just about this time, are represented in the find.

A glance at the hoard as a whole does not tell us much concerning its former owner or the circumstances which led to its burial. It is curious that it contained no Athenian, Corinthian, or Elian coins. One would think that the comparatively common issues of the last named place, at least, would be represented in a hoard buried not far away. This perhaps suggests that the former owner may have been a Macedonian soldier stationed in the Peloponnesus after the unsuccessful attempt, in 330 B.C., of the Spartan king Agis to overthrow the Macedonian supremacy. As a follower of the regent Antipater his pay, conceivably, would have been largely in Alexander tetradrachms, especially those of the principal Macedonian mint Amphipolis. The Phœnician and some of the Cilician

tetradrachms might have constituted a portion of the large amounts of silver which Arrian (III, 16, 17) says Alexander caused to be forwarded from Syria to Antipater for the express purpose of carrying on the war against the Lacedæmonians. The lesser denominations, then, especially the triobols of Sicyon, would represent the small change the soldier had received on the local market when he made purchases with his tetradrachms. What the Larissan, Theban, and Histiaean pieces are doing so far from home is not easy to conjecture unless, indeed, they were odd pieces brought along from his previous station in Thebes, Thessaly, or Eubœa — where we know the Macedonian Government kept strong garrisons. Mere fanciful conjecture all this may be, but to the writer it seems to cover the facts in the case. Conjecture, however, it will always remain. The real interest of the Kyparissia Find lies entirely in the light it throws on the circulation and dates of the Alexander tetradrachms which form its largest portion.

NOTES

¹ This find was entered on the accession book for 1892-1893 of the Athenian National Collection. It is there given the accession number KZ for that year.

² The Octobols of Histiaea, Numismatic Notes and Monographs, Am. Num. Soc. 1921.

³ Tarsos under Alexander, *Am. Jour. of Num.* Vol. LII, 1918.



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